Enhancing language teaching through Action research communities for language teachers

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CARN CONFERENCE 2017

www.ecml.at/actionresearch
Project aims

• To make techniques for action research widely available to language teachers through the establishment of a community of practice

• To strengthen professional networks by linking academic expertise on action research & good practice in the language classroom

• To contribute to improvements in language education by giving teachers across Europe better access to action research

• To enable teachers to reflect on practice & to propose & test innovations within a community of practice
Project objectives

- To design action research tools which help to improve the quality of teaching & foster dialogue between teachers in different sectors
- To demonstrate how research can feed into practice & practice into research
- To show how undertaking action research is beneficial to teachers & learners
- To create European models for peer learning activities which can be implemented at school/national level
Project team

Christine Lechner, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol
• Co-ordinator

Brynhildur Ragnarsdóttir, Language Centre, Reykjavik
• Web-site correspondent

Angela Gallagher-Brett, SOAS, University of London
• Communications person

Tita Mihaiu, Centrul pentru formarea continuă în limba germană (CPD)
• Second language documentalist
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Project team

Associate partners

Renata Zanin, University of Bolzano
• Teacher educator

Jim Murphy - CALL expert from Newfoundland

Anita Konrad, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol
• German specialist

Melanie Steiner, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol
• German Specialist

Marianne Jacquin, Teacher training institute (IUFE), University of Geneva
Project first steps

• Networking & discussions at regional levels of partners
• First workshop during International Week at Pedagogical University Tirol
• Action Research Workshop for German teachers in Sibiu / Hermannstadt October 2016
• Action Research Workshop in Graz November 2016
### Sibiu / Hermannstadt template for 3-day Action research workshop : Day 1

#### Getting into action research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content-pack</th>
<th>Aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Opening & introductions  
  • Activity finding out what we have in common | Learning about target-language country culture  
  • Austria | • To open up to working together, challenging ideas and developing teaching |
| • What do I already know about the theme? | Getting into the theme  
  • Do we all have the same ideas when we think of Austria?  
  • How to be an Austrian? | • To clarify that there are different approaches to a topic & different ideas |
| • Analytic discourse | Posters on teaching about the target language country: my status quo | • To get to know each other & to demonstrate an action research tool  
  • To show that discussions about teaching aren’t always critical, comparative... |
| • From analytic discourse to perspectives on themes | Current (opposing) trends in cultural studies & intercultural learning | • To bring the strands together  
  • To demonstrate a feedback cycle |
## Sibiu / Hermannstadt template for 3-day Action research workshop: Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting into action research</th>
<th>Content-pack</th>
<th>Aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Welcome &amp; arrival activity</td>
<td>True or not true?</td>
<td>• To bring group back together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different ideas &amp; perspectives</td>
<td>• Which of three stories is not an Austrian story?</td>
<td>• To continue with multi-perspective thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comments on feedback from Day 1 &amp; procedures for Days 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>• To demonstrate taking feedback on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some ideas about action research</td>
<td>Input on theme in form of islands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aspects of life in Austria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Literature from Austria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My life in my environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thinking about stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which materials provided were useful?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Finding themes &amp; groups for lesson development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short evaluation: The Wailing Wall</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Which materials provided were useful?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• To ensure that joint planning will work in a concrete way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To demonstrate a feedback cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Sibiu / Hermannstadt template for 3-day Action research workshop: Day 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting into action research</th>
<th>Content-pack</th>
<th>Aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Welcome & comments on evaluation |              | • To bring group back together  
• To demonstrate taking feedback on board |
| Ideas on joint planning  
• Group diamond activity to find a common vision | Our vision for good lessons about the cultures of target-language countries | • To open up ideas for joint planning/joint visions |
| Developing a lesson together | Lessons on the culture of a target-language country | • To put joint planning/joint visions into practice |
| Presentations & conclusions  
• “What is different now?”  
• Expectations how the lesson will work in the different classes  
• Clarifying reports  
• Official written evaluation & paper-ball evaluation | Lesson formats on the culture of a target-language country | • To stimulate interest for the work of others  
• To demonstrate a feedback cycle |
Graz workshop: our languages tree

- Tree representing the languages spoken by workshop participants
Graz workshop mini-projects: research topics

• Does an explicit focus on critical thinking skills in our lesson planning and instruction enable students to engage in critical thinking? Participating countries: Albania, Netherlands, Malta, Latvia

• How can pupils’ language skills be enhanced by using news media and Facebook sharing in language teaching? Croatia, Iceland

• Breaking barriers: Can we identify barriers for professional learning English as a second language at university level? Armenia, France

• What is the role of the teacher in university student-centred activities? Finland, France

• How does teaching vocabulary learning strategies contribute to learner autonomy in CLIL & MFL classrooms? Ireland

• Wie kann erreicht werden, dass die Kinder im Unterricht in der Zielsprache Deutsch sprechen? Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Romania
Graz workshop mini-projects: research topics

• Using the European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) as a self-reflection tool for improving pre- and in-service teachers’ competences. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Greece

• Challenges of CLIL teachers
  Intercultural competences through a student-based project. Czech Republic, Poland

• CLIL in secondary vocational schools seen through students’ perspectives. „The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia“, Serbia

• Intercultural competences through a student-based project. Austria, Denmark, Montenegro

• The teacher as co-constructor of knowledge. Bulgaria, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Slovenia
Workshop Follow-up

- Collaborative action research projects developed and carried out by workshop participants
- Dialogue throughout the year between teams and ARC co-ordinator
- Full project reports shared on a Padlet wall
Next steps

- Project team is working on a tool for teachers of languages
- Action research projects continuing
- Network meeting being prepared where projects will be shared and tools will be trialled
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Steps

START your lesson planning by thinking about & reflecting on several areas of focus.

RECORD your thinking & make this an explicit aspect of your planning.

1. DEFINE your focus/foi in a question format for your action research, your practice and your role in this process.

2. CHOOSE the appropriate action research tools for each focus. See list.

3. OBSERVE what is going on in your classroom whilst thinking about your action research focus. Be open to what you find & be prepared to readjust your focus.

4. PRESENT your findings so others can understand and describe in detail what you have discovered.

5. ANALYSE and INTERPRETE your findings: What do your findings mean? What are the implications for your practice? Based on your findings & reflections, readjust your focus or choose a new one.
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Bibliography


• Hui, M. & Grossman, D. Improving Teacher Education through Action Research. HKIED


Bibliography

- Austrian action research studies by teachers: https://www.imst.ac.at/imst-wiki/index.php/Hauptseite
- EU Project on Quality (dialogue sheets in English, German, French & Spanish) http://www.lanqua.eu/speaq-project/
Project website
Action research communities for language teachers
http://www.ecml.at/actionresearch